

California Man Changes the Color of a Flower.

Luther Burbank, upon whom an amazed world long since bestowed the sobriquet "Wizard of Horticulture," has accomplished another horticultural wonder, says the San Francisco Chronicle. He has turned the California poppy red. In the garden around his modest but pretty home at Santa Rosa this world-famous breeder of fruits, flowers and plants has for years been adding to the wealth of the botanical kingdom and to the flora of the world. But few if any of his remarkable achievements have possessed more interest to the Californian than this transformation of the State flower from a bright orange color to a scarlet red.

Without taking from or adding a leaf to its foliage, without changing its petals either in size or number, and without reshaping a pistil or remodeling a stamen, has this complete change of color been wrought. No wonder they call the man who did it "The Wizard of Horticulture."

Alchemy in Biology.
It is as if he had imported alchemy into the realm of biology. And yet it was no wizard's trick, no magic wand wielded by this patient, painstaking man who has the science of flowers at his finger tips. It is true that he connived at Nature's pranks, encouraged her sportive disposition, and led her on, not by artifice so much as by merely coddling her wiles.

Nature herself first offered the suggestion. She had offered it doubtless hundreds of times before, but there had been no observing eye to see it. In a single little golden cup that shone like a bright saffron star against an inverted emerald sky she wrote her challenge in a delicate, mysterious hand that only those who dwell amid the crests of the flowers could understand. It was an ordinary poppy to the ordinary eye, but, drinking lavishly its fill of the golden rays of the sun, it had caught a furtive thread of pink or pink. It was the merest suggestion that did not spread over the tenth part of one petal; the outcropping, nayhap, from some distant strain imparted by some scarlet flower that grew up as neighbor to its ancestors in bygone days; but more likely it was simply a variation of species, a "sport," as the botanists call such departures from type. It but vaguely suffused the tip of a petal, a frail, elusive tint that had crept in while Nature was on guard; but it was undeniably manifest to the eye of the botanical expert.

A Slightly Varied Type.
Burbank, in his straggles among the wild flowers around Santa Rosa, came across this slightly varied type of the Eschscholtzia, and the result was the scarlet California poppy. It has been listed, accepted and registered in the horticultural kingdom of America, and next season will be ready to begin its journey around the world, mingling and commingling with the fifty-odd other species of the Papaver family, and taking a little of California sunshine into other climes.

Not readily did Queen Eschscholtzia of California flower land give up her bright orange dress under the coaxing and tutelage of Burbank, wondrous as is his coaxing with flowers. Taken from the meadow where she knew her kind only in the blended tints of the buttercup, marigold and sunflower, she was slow to accept the pink tint that began to encroach on the silken texture of her apparel, and to deepen into damask in some of her number and scarlet in others. It took eight years' residence in the garden of the flower wizard completely to change her color to red. The task has just been accomplished, and Burbank now rejoices in a bed of several hundred Eschscholtzias, about one-third of which have the full coat of scarlet. The others range in shade from pink to scarlet, and they, like thousands of their progenitors, will be cast aside as unworthy to go forth into the world with their scarlet-robed sisters.

Pollinating Method Not Used.
It seems remarkable that Burbank should have accomplished the color transformation of the poppy merely by artificial selection in only eight years. To have done so by hybridization or crossing the golden poppy with some red member from which the Eschscholtzia could have been successfully pollinated would not seem quite so remarkable to those who know how flowers can be crossed. But the pollinating method was not used at all in changing the color of the poppy. If it had been the result would have been a hybrid poppy, of course, and not the California poppy turned red. Burbank desired the latter result, hence his eight years' experimentation on the lines of artificial selection.

Mrs. May Mave, Burbank's secretary, thus explained the method used by him in growing the red poppy: "When Mr. Burbank found a poppy with a slight suggestion of pink on one of its petals, he determined to produce Eschscholtzias of different hues. This poppy experiment is characteristic of him. Though engaged in numerous experiments with fruit trees, berry vines and the development and perfection of already cultivated flowers, the most humble little wild flower is not beneath his attention. He has experimented with hundreds of wild flowers and plants, and has succeeded in improving them and developing many of them into beautiful flowers.

Planted Seed of Red-Streaked Poppy.
"He planted the seed of the red streaked poppy he found by chance, and the next year he had a number of poppies, but only two of them had more pink or red in their petals than the parent poppy. All the others were destroyed, and the seed of these promising ones planted. The next time he got more promising variations, there was a little more red here and a little more pink there, and so on, year after year, until he got what he wanted, a red California poppy.

"There were a hundred little things to be done while the plants were growing. They had to be watched with great care, and when they bloomed every morning, just as they were spreading out their petals to greet the sun, Mr. Burbank would go out and pluck out those that did not seem inclined to vary in color from the poppy that nature creates."

Hundreds of Other Experiments.
While Burbank was working with his poppy, he had hundreds of other experiments under way, both in his large garden at his home and at his experiment farm at Sebastopol, five or six miles distant. He was breeding a new plum; imparting the flavor of the Bartlett pear to other plums; breeding new plants and flowers by the score; painting miniature pictures on the numerous colors; producing over 500 varieties of apples on one tree; teach-

ing the cactus family to put away its thorns and live peacefully with its enemies on the desert; putting new tints into the stately dahlias and adding rows of petals to their blossoms; giving the larkspur a shade of color it never wore before; creating an annual species of poppy with a perennial species, the Oriental, making daisies as large as the palm of the hand; producing a stoneless plum; crossing the plum and apricot, and carrying on numerous other experiments with more or less success. All the time, too, he is receiving letters or visits from botanists, pomologists, horticulturists and floriculturists from the world over.

A White Blackberry.
That anomaly presented to the world in the white blackberry and the creation of the primus berry, the first recorded species produced by the hand of man, are wonders performed by him which far surpass the famous Burbank potato that first brought the man

before the world. His creation of the paper-shell walnut is another scientific feat upon which some bit of his fame rests.

Things do not happen fortuitously in his beds of flowers. The flowers that blossom in his garden do so because nature bids them, but the kind of bloom put forth, the tint of their petals, the shape of their leaves and the kind of perfume they distill are controlled more or less by Burbank and his understudies. The creation of new flowers by cross fertilization of a flower with the pollen from old varieties is as old as the history of botany, and much older, for it was done accidentally by nature and by the busy little honey bee before botany was a science. Even the chrysanthemum, the flower of the "wise, precise and meticulous tresser," and the mad and miraculous tresser, had as its humble origin the buttercup and the damask rose. Every flower of our gardens must have of necessity originated from some modest wild flower.

Holland's "Tulipomania."
The changing of the color of flowers has often led to great rages for certain flowers, like the great "tulipomania," ever which all Holland was excited in the 1630s. The rage became so great that different varieties and colors of the tulip that as high as \$6000 was paid for a single bulb of the black tulip, which was evolved out of the "tulipomania." Finally the Government of Holland put an end to the speculation.

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Alice Roosevelt, the President's Daughter.

PARROT CAUSES DIVORCE.

Husband Learns That Wife Had Callers in His Absence.

CHICAGO, Dec. 31.—W. H. Smith, 7 Bingham street, owes his divorce to a parrot and the talkative bird was also the cause of his being placed under bonds to keep the peace. His wife declared he thought more of the bird than of her. After a time the parrot began to inquire for "Al." Who "Al" was Smith did not know, but it was the first question asked when he entered his home in the evening. When he learned that his wife had been having visitors at the house about whom he knew nothing he applied for a divorce, which was granted December 27. However, a week ago, the parrot disappeared.

Smith saw his former wife, bird cage in hand, leaving the Union station with "Al." Smith seized his parrot and ran pursued by Mrs. Smith to the Central police station, where a warrant was sworn out by Mrs. Smith charging Smith with making threats and disorderly conduct. He was placed under bonds of \$30 to keep the peace. As soon as Smith left the police court he hurried to the city hall and secured possession of the parrot.

"You're a good bird, even if you did make me lose my wife," said Smith. "Where's 'Al'?" asked the bird.



ATTORNEY-GENERAL MOODY.

Who Is Prosecuting the Paper Trust.

SPECIAL.
New Year's matinee and ball at Christensen's, 4 and 8:30.

HUNTING FOR PYRAMIDS.

Agent Royal Historical Society to Explore in Nevada.

CHICAGO, Dec. 31.—Because of a report that pyramids have been discovered on the Nevada desert John De L. Sharpley of Liverpool is now on his way to that desolate region. Mr. Sharpley is a special agent of the Royal Historical society of England. During the last fifteen years he has traveled in India, northern Africa and China, gathering data for the society. He stopped in Buffalo to meet several friends, who came to this city from Toronto.

"My orders are to find and examine the American pyramids," said Mr. Sharpley in the Lafayette hotel, "but I have only the most meager information to act upon. I have a map with me which represents about 125 miles of the most arid part of the desert. The pyramids are supposed to be somewhere in this square."

"The information given the society regarding the pyramids is rather vague. A couple of Englishmen who had been shooting in Nevada walked out into the desert and got lost. According to their story they wandered about for nearly a week. On the sixth day they discovered two pyramids which both declared equal to any of the Egyptian monuments in magnitude and beauty of the interior workmanship. Bubbling through the door of each pyramid, the hunters said, were several springs of fresh water. Evidently no provision had been made for the springs by those who built the pyramids, as the water had forced its way through the thick masonry."

The hunters further declared that they saw many curious characters and figures that resembled the present race of Eskimos depicted on the sides of the halls in the pyramids.

"For lack of proper instruments the hunters were unable to make a correct map of the district. Their crude attempt at securing a location they have given to the society and we have all the notes they made of the journey into the desert."

Mr. Sharpley goes to Salt Lake and will fit out his expedition at that point.

CHRISTMAS RATES
Via Oregon Short Line
December 23, 24, 25 and 31, and January 1. Final limit January 3. Ask agents for particulars.

Pittsburgh People
Should remember that the Pittsburgh special is the train to take from Chicago to Pittsburgh. It leaves Union station, Chicago, at 7:30 p. m. every day, and arrives Pittsburgh 7:45 a. m. You can learn more about this and other Pennsylvania line trains and have berths reserved through in advance by calling upon or addressing G. T. Hull, D. A., 819 Seventeenth St., Denver, Colo.

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